

Discourse Markers in High School English Textbooks in Iran

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Abstract—Discourse Markers (DMs) are affective factors to connect sentences, hence making the text coherent. The purpose of this study was to investigate the reading comprehension sections of Iranian high school English textbooks (IHSETs) to find out the extent of using DMs and their types. To this end, the reading sections in IHSETs were analyzed to determine DMs. Fraser's (1999) category of DMs were used with 4 main classifications: a) Contrastive Markers, b) Elaborative Markers, c) Inferential Markers, and 4) Topic Change Markers. To make this investigation viable, parallel texts in internationally-developed English textbooks were compared with IHSETs in terms of the use of DMs. To insure the equality of the number of words and level of difficulty, the Flesch (1948) readability formula was used. The results showed that there was a significant difference between the frequency of DMs in the reading sections of IHETs and the authentic texts to the benefit of the authentic texts. Materials designers may find the results helpful in their work.

Index Terms—discourse markers, textbooks, reading comprehension, readability

I. INTRODUCTION

Course books are necessary tools in teaching. They can manage the process of teaching and learning. Razmjoo (2007) has considered textbook as a necessary resource for foreign language learning that has the main role in teaching and learning a foreign language. He has analyzed high school textbooks versus private institute books to see whether they are based on communicative teaching principles. His study has shown that textbooks in private institutes fulfill communicative language teaching (CLT) to a great extent whereas textbooks in high school are neither based on CLT nor fulfill language learners' needs. Dahmardeh (2009) has analyzed 20 Iranian English teachers and an author of the textbooks' perspectives about English materials in Iranian English textbooks. According to his research, the disadvantages of the current courses were determined as follow (Dahmardeh, 2009, p. 2):

- a. Lack of coherence
- b. A narrow curriculum
- c. Form-based exercises
- d. Lack of flexibility

He has added that the main focus in Iranian English book is on reading comprehension and presentation of reading strategies. Reading is an important skill because other skills are defined in the framework of reading. Reading is communication between reader and writer and the purpose of reading is making the meaning.

Jahangard (2007) has pointed out that listening and speaking skills are marginal activities in EFL materials in Iranian high schools. Reading skill, which seems to be the most important skill in books, is a tool to introduce grammatical points, and texts are manipulated to reinforce particular grammatical points included in the grammar section of the book. Gabb (2001) believes that reading is like watching a movie in your head. Rivers (1981) has believed that reading is the most important skill in language learning because it can represent lots of information and is a pleasurable activity, and it can also extend one's knowledge of the language.

According to Goodman (1967), reading is a selective process. It means that comprehending a text is based on the use of available language used in the texts that are selected from perceptual input regarding what the reader expects from a text. Widdowson (1979) believes written discourse as well as spoken discourse operates in accordance with Grice's (1975) cooperative principle. Language is used as a clue to correspondence of conceptual world in this interaction between readers and writers. He has added interpretation of written or spoken discourse needs as a kind of creativity. This creativity is done based on textual clues by the readers.

A. What Is Discourse Analysis?

Widdowson (1979) has also thought that teachers generally do not pay much attention to teaching how to relate sentences together to form stretches of connected discourse. Teachers rely on the grammarian to connect the sentences

and they consider sentences as distinct units. Louwerse and Graesser (2005, pp. 1-2) infer that, "Several years ago the term *discourse* was reserved for dialogue, and text was reserved for monologue. In contemporary research, *discourse* covers both monologic and dialogic spoken and written language."

According to Fraser (1999), DMs are conjunctions, adverbs, and propositional phrases that link different parts of a text like sentences and phrases together. Redecker (1991, p. 1168) calls them discourse operators and defines them as a "word or phrase, for instance, a conjunction, adverbial, comment clause, interjection that is uttered with the primary function of bringing to listeners' attention a particular kind of the upcoming utterance with the immediate discourse context." Mingliang and Dayon (2007) have also mentioned that students will know what and how to read and reading will be simplified if they know about textual functional DMs. So, students distinguish more important sentences, and in this way, their speed in reading will increase.

B. Fraser's Discourse Markers

Fraser (1999) has claimed that DMs have been studied under various labels like, *discourse markers*, *discourse connectives*, *discourse operators*, *pragmatic connectives*, *sentence connectives*, and *cue phrases*. Fraser (1999, p. 931) defines DMs "as a class of lexical expressions drawn primarily from the syntactic classes of conjunctions, adverbs, and propositional phrases." He has also believed that DMs represent a relationship between the interpretations of a segment that is known as S2 and the previous one, S1. He has shown the canonical form as <S1. DM+ S2>. DMs in Fraser's classification have been viewed as procedural meaning, and their linguistic and conceptual interpretation is 'negotiated' by the context. Fraser (1999) introduces two kinds of DMs. The first group relates to some aspects of S2 to S1 explicitly, and the second group relates the topic of S1 to S2. According to him, there are some important issues about DMs.

DMs relate some aspects of the message in S2 and S1. The first class in Fraser's category is Contrastive Markers. These kinds of DMs show that interpretation of S2 contrasts with an interpretation of S1. Consider this sentence that contains DMs:

- John weighs 150 pounds. *In comparison*, Jim weighs 155.

In this sentence, *in comparison* indicates that S2 is in contrast with S1. According to meaning, this subclass can be divided as (Fraser, 1999, p. 947):

- a. but
- b. however, (al)though
- c. in contrast (with/ to this/ that), whereas
- d. in comparison (with/ to this/ that)
- e. on the contrary; contrary to this/ that
- f. conversely
- g. Instead (of (doing) this/ that, in spite of (doing) this/ that, nevertheless, nonetheless, still)

The second subclass is called Elaborative Markers. DMs relate messages in S2 to S1. "In these cases, the DM signals a quasi-parallel relationship between S2 and S1" (Fraser, 1999, p. 948):

- You should be always polite. *Above all*, you shouldn't belch at the table.
- They didn't want to upset the meeting by too much talking. *Similarly*, we didn't want to upset the meeting by too much drinking.

Finer distinctions include:

- a. and
- b. above all, also, besides, better yet, for another thing, furthermore, in addition, moreover, more to the point, on top of it all, too, to cap it all off, what is more
- c. I mean, in particular, namely, parenthetically, that is (to say)
- d. analogously, by the same token, correspondingly, equally, likewise, similarly
- e. be that as it may, or, otherwise, that said, well

The third class of DMs in Fraser's is called Inferential Markers. These group of DMs shows that S2 is seen as conclusion for S1:

- The bank has been closed all day. *Thus*, we couldn't make a withdrawal.
- It's raining. *Under those conditions*, we should ride our bikes.

It can also be said that S1 is viewed as a reason for S2. Thus, it indicates that content of S2 is the conclusion of S1. Inferential markers can be placed in these subclasses:

- a. so
- b. of course
- c. accordingly, as a consequence, as a logical conclusion, as a result, because of this/that, consequently, for this/that reason, hence, it can be concluded that, therefore, thus
- d. in this/ that case, under these/those conditions, then
- e. all this things considered

As mentioned before, the first main class of DMs relates some aspects of S1 and S2; they are called Contrastive Markers, Elaborative Markers, and Inferential Markers. The second main class of DMs in Fraser's category is Topic Change Markers:

- The dinner looks delicious. *Incidentally* where do you shop?
- I am glad that it is finished. *To return to my point*, I'd like to discuss your paper.

In the first example, *incidentally* shows that S2 is a digression from the topic of S1, whereas in the other example, *to return to my point* indicates that the speaker intends to reintroduce the previous topic. They are:

back to my original point, I forget, by the way, incidentally, just to update you, on a different note, speaking of X, that reminds me, to change to topic, to return to my point, while I think of it, with regards to

C. Coherence and Cohesive Devices

Dulger (2007) has mentioned that a writer follows a coherent composition from word to sentence and from sentence to paragraph. Cohesive devices connect sentences, and Dulger mentions that a coherent text has a smooth flow in which sentences follow each other easily. He has added that readers make use of syntactic and structural relations to get the meaning of the text. In written discourse and above sentence level, besides punctuation and layout, discourse markers help writers to connect sentences to form a paragraph and paragraphs to form a text. Hussein (2006) has claimed that coherence group considers DMs as linguistic devices. He also adds that DMs cause coherence in the text by connecting different parts of a text.

Halliday and Hasan (1976) have viewed coherence of a text as well-formed text. They also believe that cohesion is a linguistic device through the use of which we can relate units of a text so that the text becomes coherent. A text can be coherent by using co-reference, ellipsis, and conjunctions. They have also represented five categories for English cohesive devices: 1) reference, 2) substitution, 3) ellipses, 4) lexical cohesion, and 5) conjunction. Halliday and Hasan have viewed conjunction or connective element as discourse markers; they are some categories for discourse markers:

1. Additive: and, or, also, in addition, furthermore, besides, similarly, likewise, by contrast, for instance, etc.
2. Adversative: but, yet, however, instead, on the other hand, nevertheless, at any rate, as a matter of fact, etc.
3. Causal: so, consequently, it follows, for, because, under the circumstances, for this reason, etc.
4. Continuative: now, of course, well, anyway, surely, after all, etc.

They have pointed out that if sentences are related semantically through the use of cohesive devices it can be known as a text. So, the terms 'texture' and 'cohesion' are extremely related together. Halliday and Hasan (1976) classified cohesion into two types: grammatical cohesion and lexical cohesion. The most familiar group for grammatical cohesion is DMs. Hussein (2006, p. 3) has referred to some examples for DMs:

- a. He has got a very good mark in the math test.
- b. **And**, he has been the first in his class for the last. (additive)
- c. **Yet**, he failed his syntax test this term. (adversative)
- d. **Now**, he feels very frustrated and thinks of leaving school. (temporal)

Hussein (2006, p. 3) has mentioned that lexical cohesion can be achieved through repetition or reiteration. There was a great **woman**, who used to look after me when I was a kid. She used to feed me, play with me, and tell me nice stories. The **woman** was my **mother**.

II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A number of questions such as: How are DMs used in Iranian high school English textbooks? Are such important factors taken into consideration? Are students exposed to DMs sufficiently in reading comprehension sections in English textbooks? Were addresses in this study which aimed at studying how DMs are used in Iranian high school English textbooks for the first time. It also analyzed teachers' ideas about these books regarding using DMs, and whether students know about the influence of DMs on reading comprehension.

III. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

According to what has been said so far, the following questions were raised:

1. To what extent are DMs used in the reading comprehension sections in high school English textbooks in Iran?
2. What kinds of DMs are used in the reading comprehension sections in high school English textbooks in Iran?

IV. METHODOLOGY

A. Materials

In this research study, some instruments were used with the purpose of collecting the information. One was Fraser's (1999) category of DMs, Iranian high school English Textbooks, authentic books which were written by native speakers of English a questionnaire based on Miekley's (2005) and Yannopoulos's (2004) checklist which were given to the teachers. The other instrument used was Flesch (1948) readability formulas to determine the readability of the different texts.

1. Iranian High School English Textbooks (IHSETs)

All of the reading sections in IHSETs were analyzed to distinguish the DMs. There are 9 reading comprehension sections in *Book 1* (Birjandi, Soheili, Nowroozi, & Mahmoodi, 2000), 7 reading comprehension sections in *Book 2* (Birjandi, Nowroozi, & Mahmoodi, 2002a), 6 reading comprehension sections, in *Book 3* (Birjandi, Nowroozi, &

Mahmoodi, 2002b), and 8 lessons in *Book 4* (Birjandi, Ananisarab, & Samimi, 2006). *Book 4* was used as a pre-university book before (by 2010), but now the system of education has changed and the pre-university cycle is called the 4th Grade.

2. Authentic Texts

To analyze the DMs in IHSETs, it was necessary to compare these texts with authentic texts. There was a traditional suppose that learners should be presented by simplified language, but nowadays it is recommended that they should deliver authentic language (Widdowson, 1979). So, 14 reading texts were selected randomly from prevalent authentic books which are taught in Iran. These books are:

1. *Steps to Understanding* by L.A. Hill, (1980)
2. *Start Reading 4 and 5* by Derek Strange (1989)
3. *New Headway English Course* by Liza John Soars (2000a)
4. *Developing Reading Skills* by Linda Markstein and Louise Hirasawa (1981)
5. *Expanding Reading Skill* by Linda Markstein and Louise Hirasawa (1982)
6. *New American Streamline* by Bernard Hartley and Peter Viney (1995)
7. *Interchange 3 Students Book* by Jack C. Richards, Jonathan Hull, and Susan Proctor (2005)
8. *Marvin's Woolly Mammoth* by Jill Eggleton(n.d.)

B. Procedure

The aim of the current research was the analysis of frequency of the DMs and kinds of the DMs in IHSETs. All of the reading sections in IHSETs were analyzed to distinguish kinds of the DMs and more than 50% of the reading sections were investigated to show the frequencies of DMs. It should be mentioned that the investigation of frequency is not viable unless we compare these reading sections with some texts in authentic texts. In order to analyze the DMs, some criteria were used. The present study benefited from Frasers' (1999) category of DMs to analyze the reading comprehension sections in IHSETs in terms of using the DMs and familiarizing the students with DMs in the reading comprehension sections.

To determine the number of the DMs in IHSETs, the frequency of DMs used in each reading passage was identified and they were presented in tables. Four tables were prepared to show the DMs contained in the reading sections in each IHSET. Then, to compare the reading sections in IHSETs and the authentic texts properly, it was necessary to determine the readability ratio of each text. Flecsh's Readability Formula was used to determine the difficulty level of the reading passages. In this way, one can see whether the DMs used in IHSETs reading sections are sufficient. To compare the texts, they should be equal regarding the number of words or length of the texts and their level of difficulty.

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

In this study, two questions were put forward regarding the DMs in the English textbooks in high school. To answer the first question, the reading comprehension sections of the textbooks were analyzed regarding the use of the DMs. To make this investigation viable, parallel texts in internationally developed English textbooks were compared with IHSETs in terms of the use of the DMs. The texts in the textbooks in comparison to the texts in internationally developed English textbooks should have been in the same level of readability and length. So, the readability of all the texts in the textbooks and their parallel texts in internationally prepared texts was determined by the use of Flesch's Readability Formula. Fifty per cent of the texts in the textbooks were selected randomly and were investigated in terms of the use of the DMs.

A. Answering the First Research Question

To answer the first research question—that is, “to what extent are DMs used in the reading comprehension sections in high school English textbooks in Iran?”—the frequencies of DMs in *English Books 1, 2, 3 and 4* were investigated and compared with the DMs in the authentic texts.

1. DMs in English Book 1

There were nine reading comprehension texts in *English Book 1*, four texts of which were investigated in terms of the use of DMs and were compared to the authentic texts in internationally developed textbooks (see Table 5.1 in Appendix B). The first column includes the titles of reading sections in *English Book 1* that were compared to the authentic texts. These two groups of texts had to be equal in the rate of readability and their length. So, the second and third columns indicate the number of words in each reading section and their readability score. The main issue in this table is the number of DMs which are shown in the fifth column. The second half of the table shows the same information for texts of internationally developed books.

Regarding Table 5.1, the number of the DMs in four reading sections of *English Book 1* is nine, whereas the number of the DMs in the parallel texts of the authentic textbook is 45. In order to investigate the difference in frequency of the DMs in high school texts and the authentic texts, a chi-square test was run. Table 5.1 shows the results of this test:

TABLE 5.1.
THE RESULTS OF THE CHI-SQUARE FOR BOOK 1

	Observed	Expected <i>N</i>	Residual
Authentic Text	45	27.0	18.0
English Book 1	9	27.0	-18.0
Total	54		

Test Statistics

	aval
Chi-Square ^a	24.000
df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.000

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 27.0.

As the statistics in Table 5.1 reveals, the chi-square is 24 which is significant at $p = .000$. Therefore, the texts in *English Book 1* were statistically different from the authentic texts in terms of the number of the DMs used.

2. DMs in English Book 2

The reading comprehension texts of lesson 2, 4, 6, and 7 were selected from seven reading comprehension sections of *English Book 2*. Parallel texts which were equal in length and readability were found in internationally developed books and these two groups of texts were compared in terms of using the DMs. The results of these comparisons are presented in Table 5.2 (see Appendix B). The number of the DMs used in *English Book 2* was 25 and the number of the DMs of the authentic texts was 41. Another chi-square test was employed to compare the frequencies of the DMs in both series. Table 5.2 indicates the results of this test:

TABLE 5.2.
THE RESULTS OF THE CHI-SQUARE FOR BOOK 2

English book 2

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Authentic	41	33.0	8.0
English Book	25	33.0	-8.0
Total	66		

Test Statistics

	dovom
Chi-Square ^a	3.879
df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.049

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 33.0.

The statistics in Table 5.2 reveals that the chi-square is 3.879 which is significant at $p = .049$. Therefore, the texts in *English Book 2* were statistically different from the authentic texts with regard to the number of the DMs used.

3. DMs in English Book 3

English Book 3 includes six reading comprehension texts. Again, four of the reading comprehension sections were selected and the DMs in these texts were compared to the DMs in texts of internationally developed books. The results of these comparisons are presented in Table 5.3 (see Appendix B). A third chi-square was used to compare the frequencies of the DMs in the two series. Table 5.3 demonstrates the results of this chi-square test:

TABLE 5.3.
THE RESULTS OF THE CHI-SQUARE FOR BOOK 3

English Book 3

	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Authentic	45	32.5	12.5
English Book	20	32.5	-12.5
Total	65		

Test Statistics	
	sevom
Chi-Square ^a	9.615
df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.002

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 32.5.

Table 5.1 on page 7 shows that the amount of chi-square (9.615) is high enough to indicate that the difference between the frequencies is statistically significant ($p = .000$). Therefore, once again it can be claimed that the texts in English Book 1 were statistically different from the authentic texts regarding the number of the DMs used.

4. DMs in English Book 4

English Book 4 contains eight lessons and each lesson has one reading text except Lesson 8 which has two reading texts. So, this book includes nine reading texts. Although this book has used authentic texts for reading comprehension sections, in order to determine the number of the DMs in this book, six texts were selected and compared to the texts from internationally developed books which were equal in the length and readability. The results of these comparisons are presented in Table 5.4 (see Appendix B). In order to compare the frequencies, one last chi-square was implemented. Table 5.4 shows the results:

TABLE 5.4.
THE RESULTS OF THE CHI-SQUARE FOR BOOK 1

English Book 4			
	Observed N	Expected N	Residual
Authentic	49	44.0	5.0
English Book	39	44.0	-5.0
Total	88		

Test Statistics	
	charom
Chi-Square ^a	1.136
df	1
Asymp. Sig.	.286

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected frequencies less than 5. The minimum expected cell frequency is 44.0.

By examining Table 5.4, one can understand the amount of chi-square (1.136) is only significant at $p = .286$ which is not an acceptable amount to claim that the two series are different in the number of the DMs used.

B. Answering the Second Research Question

To answer the second question—that is, “What kinds of DMs are used more in the reading comprehension sections in high school English textbooks in Iran?”—the DMs in all the reading comprehension texts were studied. All the DMs used in the English textbooks were classified in according to Fraser’s category of DMs.

1. Different Kinds of DMs in English Book 1

In order to investigate different kinds of the DMs in *English Book 1*, the reading comprehension texts of *English Book 1* were studied. Table 5 (see Appendix B) shows all the DMs used in *English Book 1*. As it is shown in Table 5, of the various kinds of ‘contrastive markers’ category, only *but* was used and of different kinds of ‘elaborative markers’ category, only *and* was used. But ‘inferential markers’ included more varieties. The most frequent kind of DM category was ‘contrastive markers’ in *English Book 1*, and there was no ‘topic change marker’. Interestingly, the reading text in Lesson 9 included no DMs at all.

2. Different Kinds of DMs in English Book 2

All seven reading comprehension sections of *English Book 2* were investigated in terms of different kinds of the DMs. There were 52 DMs in *English Book 2* (see Table 5.5 in Appendix B). There were 19 *buts* from the category of ‘contrastive markers.’ Like *English Book 1*, other kinds of ‘contrastive markers’ were not included in the text, but ‘inferential markers’ and ‘elaborative markers’ included more varieties. There was no ‘topic change marker,’ the same as *English Book 1*, whereas the most frequent kind of the DMs was ‘elaborative markers’ in *English Book 2*.

3. Different Kinds of DMs in English Book 3

The reading comprehension texts in *English Book 3* were studied in terms of the use of the DMs. There were 35 DMs in this book (see Table 5.7 in Appendix B). There were 13 ‘elaborative markers’ used in *English Book 3* which was the most frequent kind of the DMs in *English Book 3* and ‘contrastive markers’ were the second most frequent kind of the

DMs in this book. In this book, *however* was added to the category of ‘contrastive markers’ which was absent in the two previous books. Again, ‘topic change markers’ were not included.

4. Different Kinds of DMs in English Book 4

There were authentic texts in *English Book 4*. Although long texts were presented to the students, these texts include different frequency of the DMs from *English Books 1, 2, and 3*. Various kinds of DMs were used in *English Book 4* (see Table 5.8 in Appendix B). It was a big change in the case of DMs between three previous books and *English Book 4*. This book, unlike the three previous books, included ‘topic change markers.’ The most frequent DMs used in *English Book 4* were ‘elaborative markers,’ and then ‘contrastive markers.’ The least frequent DMs, however, were ‘topic change markers.’

According to the analysis of the DMs in these books, the DMs in *English Book 4* were used in a logical manner in comparison to the DMs in *English Books 1, 2, and 3*. So, to show what kinds of DMs were used more, two separate tables were prepared. The first table (Table 5.5) represents the kinds and percentage of the DMs in *English Books 1, 2, and 3* and the second table (Table 5.6) shows the kinds of the DMs used in *English Book 4* (see Appendix B). Figure 5.1 shows the percentages of the DMs in *English Books 1, 2, and 3*, and Figure 5.2 illustrates the percentages of the DMs in *English Book 4*:

TABLE 5.5.
THE MOST AND THE LEAST FREQUENT DMs IN ENGLISH BOOKS 1, 2, AND 3

Kinds of DMs & percentages	Contrastive	Elaborative	Inferential	Topic Change
Book 1	16	8	12	0
Book 2	19	22	11	0
Book 3	12	13	10	0
Total Number & Percentage	47 38.21%	43 34.95%	33 26.82%	0 0%

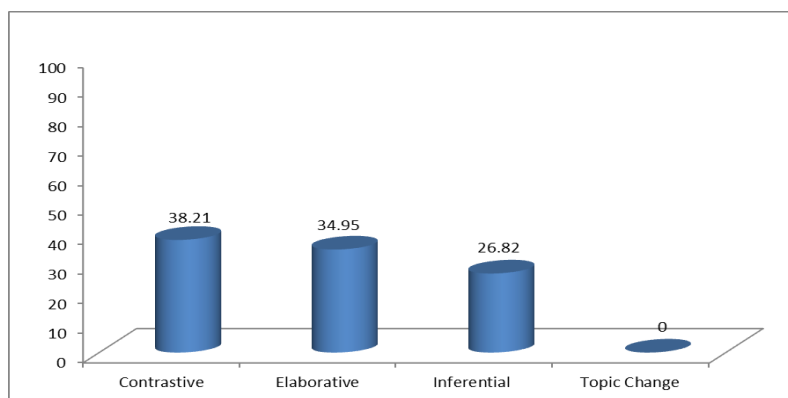


Figure 5.1. DMs in English Books 1, 2, and 3

In ‘contrastive markers’ *but* was the most frequent kind of the DMs in *English Books 1, 2 and 3*, there were 46 *buts*. There were 16, 19, and 11 *buts* in *English Books 1, 2, and 3*, respectively. The second frequent DMs used were 28 *ands* from ‘elaborative markers.’ There were 8, 14, and 6 *ands* in *English Books 1, 2, and 3*, respectively. In ‘inferential categories,’ the most frequent DMs was 12 *sos*. There were 4, 7, and 1 *sos* in *English Books 1, 2, and 3*, respectively. Totally, there were 47 (or 38.21%) ‘contrastive markers,’ 43 (or 34.95%) ‘elaborative markers,’ 33 (or 26.82%) ‘inferential markers,’ and ‘topic change markers’ were totally ignored in these books. At the end, it can be concluded that the most frequent kinds of DMs in *English Books 1, 2, and 3* is ‘contrastive markers’ (38. 21%) and the least one is ‘topic change markers’ (0%).

TABLE 5.6.
THE MOST AND THE LEAST FREQUENT DMs IN ENGLISH BOOKS 4

Kinds of DMs & Percentage	Contrastive	Elaborative	Inferential	Topic Change
Book 4	28 37.83%	34 45.94%	11 14.86%	1 1.35%

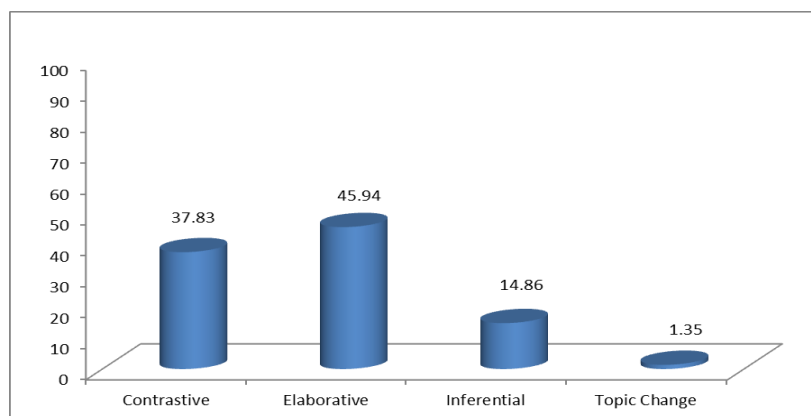


Figure 5.1. DMs in English Books

According to this Table 5.6, ‘elaborative markers’ (45.94%) were the most frequent kinds of DMs in *English Book 4* and after ‘elaborative markers’ were ‘contrastive markers’ (37.83%). Although ‘topic change markers’ are not totally ignored in comparison to *English Books 1, 2, and 3*, it is not used sufficiently (1.35%).

VI. DISCUSSION

Regarding the importance of DMs in reading comprehension, the findings of this study revealed that the frequencies of the DMs in the reading comprehension sections in IHSETs are not sufficient. It means that the learners comprehend the texts better when the texts included enough number of DMs. DMs in a text increase the coherence of a text. Larson (1987) believes that “the determination of coherence is fundamentally an interpretation by a reader. It is part of a transaction between text and reader—between the readers’ world and the writers’ language” (pp. 66-72). In addition, when students are acquainted with different kinds of DMs, they are able to recognize the basic structure of a text, so it enhances their comprehension of a text. For instance, if a sentence includes *because* or *so*, readers can realize that it is a cause-effect sentence. Dymock (2005) thinks one of students’ problems in comprehending the texts is that they are not aware of the basic structures of a text. Expository texts come in a variety of patterns like description, sequence, compare-contrast, cause-effect, and problem solution.

Eslami-Rasekh and Eslami-Rasekh (2007) investigated DMs in a study in three academic lectures. They found out that DMs are important because they help readers and listeners understand the text better. They revealed in their results that DMs facilitate the process of listening comprehension.

The findings of the present study revealed that DMs are not used sufficiently in reading comprehension texts in *English Books 1, 2, and 3* in comparison to the texts in internationally developed books. But the DMs in the reading comprehension texts in *English Book 4* in Iranian high schools are taken into consideration and are used sufficiently. According to the results of this study, the structure of *English Book 4* is different from the structure of *English Books 1, 2, and 3*.

Riazi and Mosalanejad (2010) have also studied occurrence of different learning objectives in exercises and tasks of the textbooks based on Bloom’s (1965) taxonomy in English books. Bloom’s taxonomy includes six levels of educational objectives: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. They have classified these objectives into “lower” and “higher” order cognitive skills in their study.

This investigation showed that lower order components were dominant in English books in high school. ‘Application’ was the most frequent taxonomy in *English Books 1, 2, and 3* and ‘evaluation taxonomy’ was totally absent in *English Books 1, 2, and 3*. But ‘evaluation taxonomy’ was considered in *English Book 4*, and again attention to lower order cognitive skills were more than higher order objectives. Finally, it is important to note that “lower order” taxonomies were more frequent than “higher order” cognitive skills.

By improving the materials, authors can aid students to go beyond the lower level taxonomies and move to higher order taxonomies. In the knowledge stage—the first level—students just remember the information or recall them, or then, in comprehension, students understand the facts by translating, giving description, interpreting and giving main ideas. In the last level, ‘evaluation,’ students are able to make judgments about information and ideas. According to teachers’ ideas, DMs have not received enough attention in *English Books 1, 2 and 3*, but explanations in *English Book 4* are provided to some extent and frequencies of the DMs in the texts are sufficient. Riazi and Mosalanejad (2010) believe that students in grade 4 consider the texts and the topic as a whole and their comprehension is higher in comparison with students who study the reading texts of *English Books 1, 2, and 3*. It was mentioned earlier that DMs help readers to comprehend the texts, but authors of the IHSETBs were not aware of this influence, so they omitted the DMs to simplify the texts, and it produced the opposite results.

Some of the teachers thought the DMs were used in *English Book 4* more frequently than in *English Books 1, 2, and 3* because the main focus in *English Book 4* is reading comprehension. But according to Dahmarde (2009), *English Books 1, 2, and 3* have also focused on reading comprehension. Reading comprehension has a big part in these three

English books but there is little attention on teaching strategies of reading. Based on high school English teachers' opinions, students tried to learn and memorize the meaning of the new vocabulary or structural points in the process of reading. Students' reading skill does not improve in high school and they do not read to make meaning of the text. They are not taught to focus on meaning or they are not told not to translate the texts. Interestingly, students thought the important points in comprehending the texts were new vocabulary and structural points.

When students in grade 4 were asked about comprehension of the texts, they answered that although the texts are longer than the texts in *English Books 1, 2, and 3*, they are more interesting and they could comprehend the texts better. They also said that they are not able to guess the meaning of the texts. Although many kinds of DMs are presented to students in *English Book 4*, they consider them as structural rules. They are not told that these markers help them to make a relationship between different sentences. If they were aware of the influence of DMs, they would be able to consider the sentences as a whole and focus on meaning instead of focusing on separate items of vocabulary. They realized that the way of reading changed completely from readings in the three previous books, but they did not know why they comprehend the text better, and even they did not know better comprehension of the texts is the result of DMs which make the text coherent.

The results also showed that 'contrastive markers' are the most frequent kinds of DMs used in *English Books 1, 2 and 3*. These three books include 38.21% 'contrastive markers,' 34.95% 'elaborative markers,' 26.82% 'inferential markers' of the total DMS, and 'topic change markers' are not used at all. *English Book 4* considered DMs as an important topic, so it was studied separately regarding the kinds of DMs used. 'Elaborative markers' are used more than other three categories of DMs. This book includes 37.83% 'contrastive markers,' 45.94% 'elaborative markers,' 14.86% 'inferential markers,' and just 1.35% 'topic change markers.'

VII. CONCLUSION

According to the results of this study, the reading comprehension sections of high school *English Books 1, 2, and 3* in Iran do not include sufficient number of DMs, but the reading comprehension texts in *English Book 4* have enough number of DMs. In addition, in terms of the kinds of DMs used in English books, the findings of this study demonstrated that the most frequent kinds of DMs in *English Books 1, 2, and 3* are 'contrastive markers,' whereas 'topic change markers' are not included. In *English Book 4*, however, the most frequent kind of DMs is 'elaborative markers' and the least one is 'topic change markers.' In the case of teachers' ideas about the DMs in English books, the present study showed that the teachers had the same ideas as the results of the study. They believed that the number of the DMs in *English Books 1, 2, and 3* are not sufficient. But the number of the DMs in *English Book 4* was enough. They also added that the DMs in the reading sections help students to comprehend the text better. The students thought they understand the texts better in *English Book 4*, but they did not know that DMs increase this comprehension. By representing shortages of the DMs in *English Books 1, 2, and 3*, it is hoped that the findings will encourage the authors of textbooks to consider the use of DMs in the process of reading comprehension as an important factor in reading skill.

APPENDIX A THE FLESCH'S (1948) READING EASE READABILITY FORMULA

The specific mathematical formula is:

$$RE = 206.835 - (1.015 \times ASL) - (84.6 \times ASW)$$

RE = Readability Ease

ASL = Average Sentence Length (i.e., the number of words divided by the number of sentences)

ASW = Average number of syllables per word (i.e., the number of syllables divided by the number of words). Flesch (1948) (as cited in Crossley, 2011)

APPENDIX B

TABLE 5.1.
COMPARISON OF DMS IN ENGLISH BOOK 1 AND THE AUTHENTIC TEXTS

Textbook 1, Lessons:	Readability	Number of Words	DMS	Number of DMS	Authentic Books	Readability	Number of Words	DMS	Number of DMS
The Funny Farmhand (2)	69.419	130	and	1	Introductory Steps to Understanding	89.788	147	so, and, but, too, but, and, and	7
Learn a Foreign Language (5)	83.582	204	because, but,	2	Racing Driver (Head Way)	83.18	212	So, because, then, and, so, then, because, but, but, and, because	11
The Boy Who Made Steam Work (6)	94.481	324	but, but, and, but, and, and	6	Looking After Sarah (Start Reading 4)	91.745	315	and, but, and, then, and, but, and, but, so, again, but, again, and, again, so, too, then, but, again	19
The Holy Prophet (9)	79.683	160		0	The New Mozart (Head Way)	81.826	143	but, and, but, but, and, too, and, so	8
				Total: 9					Total: 45

TABLE 5.2.
COMPARISON OF DMS IN ENGLISH BOOK 2 AND THE AUTHENTIC TEXTS

Book 2, Lesson:	Readability	Number of Words	DMS	Number of DMS	Authentic Books	Readability	Number of Words	DMS	Number of DMS
Charls Dickens and the Little Children (4)	93.362	263	so, and, but, and	4	Taffy's Trousers	93.314	262	too, but, and, but, but, and, but, and	9
Hic Hic Hic (6)	41.715	223	and, then, or, or, or, but, but, and, but	8	The Lady Who Lives on Plan	49.422	211	because, so, but, then, also, and, and, but, because, and	10
How Are You (7)	80.381	444	but, but, but, but, but, so, so, yet	8	The Empty Chair	72.111	460	well, and, and, then, because, well, and, but, and, but, and, and, but, because, because	14
The Other Side of the Moon (2)	95.588	216	but, but, but, but, so	5	Marvin's Woolly Mammoth	93.708	234	then, so, then, but, but, and, still, and,	8
				Total: 25					Total: 41

TABLE 5.3.
COMPARISON OF DMS IN ENGLISH BOOK 3 AND THE AUTHENTIC TEXTS

Book 3 Lesson:	Readability	Number of Words	DMS	Number of DMS	Authentic Books	Readability	Number of Words	DMS	Number of DMS
TV or no TV (1)	93.177	351	then, but, and	3	The King of the Fish	97.313	332	too, but, and, and, and, and, then, but, so, then, but	11
Memory (3)	70.277	263	yet, but, thus, but, again	5	Trading Space	73.677	292	and, however, but, so, but, but, but, so, but, even though	11
The Olympic Games (4)	61.317	244	and, because of	2	The Tale of Horribly Good Bertha	75.165	252	And, and, so, and, and, but, and, and, because, and, but	11
Every Word IS a Puzzle (5)	87.898	410	but, and, then, but, so, but, because, and, but, but	10	Kiamaus Paper Bag	89.158	374	and, too, too, but, and, then, and, and, then, then, and, and	12
				Total: 20					Total: 45

TABLE 5.4.
COMPARISON OF DMS IN ENGLISH BOOK 4 AND THE AUTHENTIC TEXTS

Book Lesson:	4	Readability	Number of Words	DMS	Number of DMS	Authentic Books	Readability	Number of Words	DMS	Number of DMS
How to Give a Good Speech(2)		72.312	655	and, then, also, and, but, and, but,	7	How to Give a Good Speech	79.975	652	so, again, and, and, then, and, and, then, but, too, and	11
Space Exploration (6)		62.808	596	then, also, also although, and	5	What You Don't Know about Exercise	63.276	608	but, too, and, but, and, and, however, that means, but	10
Mother Teresa (8)		54.548	315	and, although, still, and	4	Ordering Aspirin is Truly a Wonder Drug	54.966	308	although, and, also, but, and, but	6
Thomas Edison (8)		55.337	294	besides, and, although, instead	4	The Crime of the Month	57.603	32	and, moreover, also, on the other hand, also, but	7
Global Warming, Global Concern (3)		75.029	594	but, and, and because, but, but, but, in some cases, but, with this in mind	10	The Earth's Spreading Desert	69.231	604	however, and, and, and, still, but, but,	7
Earthquakes and How to Survive Them (4)		78.893	543	in comparison to, but, though, so, but, but, and, so, but,	9	Living a Long Life	80.273	559	and, by comparison, but, too, well, also, therefore	8
					Total: 39					Total: 49

TABLE 5.5.
DIFFERENT TYPES OF DMS IN ENGLISH BOOK 1

Book Lessons	1	Contrastive Markers	Elaborative Markers	Inferential Markers	Topic Change Markers	Total
Lesson 1	-	-	-	so, so	-	2
Lesson 2	-	-	and	-	-	1
Lesson 3	but, but, but	but, but, but	and	because, therefore, then	-	7
Lesson 4	but, but, but, but	but, but, but, but	-	then, then	-	6
Lesson 5	but	but	-	because	-	2
Lesson 6	but, but, but	but, but, but	and, and, and	-	-	6
Lesson 7	but, but, but, but	but, but, but, but	and, and, and	so, then	-	9
Lesson 8	but	but	-	so, then	-	3
Lesson 9	-	-	-	-	-	0
Total	16 but	16 but	8 and	4 so, 2 because, 1 therefore, 5 then	0	36

TABLE 5.6.
DIFFERENT TYPES OF DMS IN ENGLISH BOOK 2

Book Lessons	2	Contrastive Markers	Elaborative Markers	Inferential Markers	Topic Change Markers	Total
Lesson 1	but	but	and, and, too, and	then, then, so	-	8
Lesson 2	but, but, but, but	but, but, but, but	-	So	-	5
Lesson 3	but, but	but, but	and	-	-	3
Lesson 4	but	but	and, and	So	-	4
Lesson 5	but, but, but	but, but, but	and, and, and, and, and, and, too, also, again	then, so, so	-	15
Lesson 6	but, but, but	but, but, but	and, or, or, or, and	then	-	9
Lesson 7	but, but, but, but, but	but, but, but, but, but	yet	So, so	-	8
Total	19 but	19 but	14 and, 3 or, 2 too, 1 also, 1 yet, 1 again	7 so, 4 then	-	52

TABLE 5.7.
DIFFERENT TYPES OF DMS IN ENGLISH BOOK 3

Book Lesson	3	Contrastive Markers	Elaborative Markers	Inferential Markers	Topic Change Markers	Total
Lesson 1	but	but	and	then	-	3
Lesson 2	but, but, however	but, but, however	in other words, or, and, and	because of	-	8
Lesson 3	but, but,	but, but,	yet, again	thus	-	5
Lesson 4			and,	because of	-	2
Lesson 5	but, but, but, but, but	but, but, but, but, but	and, and,	then, so, because	-	10
Lesson 6	but	but	in addition to, also, also	because, This means, furthermore	-	7
Total	11 but, 1 however	11 but, 1 however	1 in other words, 1 again, 1 or, 6 and, 1 yet, 1 in addition to, 2 also.	2 because of, 2 then, 1 thus, 1 so, 2 because, 1 this means, 1 furthermore	-	35

TABLE 5.8.
DIFFERENT TYPES OF DMS IN ENGLISH BOOK 4

Book 4 Lessons	Contrastive Markers	Elaborative Markers	Inferential Markers	Topic Change Markers	Total
Lesson 1	but, but, but, but	and, and, and, also, means, in addition, in addition, and, in other words, too,	because, because, so	-	17
Lesson 2	but, but	also, and, and, and	then	-	7
Lesson 3	but, but, but, but, but	and, and	in some cases, because	with this in mind	10
Lesson 4	in comparison to, but, though, but, but, but	and,	so, so	-	9
Lesson 5	but, but, on the other hand	also, also, also, and, also	because, in many cases	-	10
Lesson 6	although	also, and, also	then	-	5
Lesson 7	however, although, but	also, and, and, also, and	-	-	8
Lesson 8 (Reading 1)	although, still	and, and	-	-	4
Lesson 8 (Reading 2)	although, instead,	besides, and	-	-	4
Total	18 but, 5 (al)though, 1 on the other hand, 1 however, 1 in comparison, 1 instead, 1 still	18 and, 10 also, 1 besides, 1 in other words, 1 means, 2 in addition, 1 too	3 so, 4 because, 2 then, 2 in cases,	1 with this in mind	74

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